Amendments to the Abstract

Please replace the abstract of the disclosure with the following amended abstract of the disclosure:

A method ~~is provided~~ of combining first and second attribute sets each comprising at least one ~~attribute/value~~ attribute and value pair by which a named attribute is assigned a value that comprises one of a end value and a further attribute set~~. The first attribute set is, for example, a resource description whilst the second attribute set defines specific attribute values. The method~~ involves carrying out a merge operation that combines the ~~attribute/value~~ attribute and value pairs of the first and second attribute sets according to their levels in ~~their~~ respective attribute trees with conflicts arising between attributes having the same path in each tree being resolved, on a top-down basis, according to predetermined rules.